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Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Report by the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/100, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually, to the Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[1] A similar mandate is contained in Assembly resolution 50/203.

2. In each of the three reports submitted in the course of a year, on a rolling basis, information is provided that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body in order to facilitate its decision-making process. The report to the Economic and Social Council aims at assisting it in its coordination function; the report to the Commission on the Status of Women highlights efforts made by the Secretariat in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective. The report to the General Assembly contains information on the activities undertaken by the entities of the United Nation system, including specialized agencies and international financial institutions, as well as an analysis of activities undertaken at the national level, and by non-governmental organizations and civil society.

3. The present report is intended to update the information provided in the reports to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, in 1999 (A/54/264), and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fourth session, in 2000 (E/CN.6/2000/2), concerning developments related to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in intergovernmental forums reporting to the Economic and Social Council, in the regional commissions and in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999 (E/1999/54).

II. Results of the Commission on the Status of Women

4. The Commission on the Status of Women held its forty-fourth session from 28 February to 2 March 2000. The session was followed, from 3 to 17 March, by the third session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The special session of the General Assembly was held from 5 to 9 June 2000.

A. Decisions of the Commission on the Status of Women

5. During its session, the Commission held a panel discussion on emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the situation of women or equality between women and men. The Commission discussed the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions, which is now a standing item on the Commission's agenda following the note prepared by the Secretariat concerning the steps already taken by the Commission to implement the Council's policy decisions (E/CN.6/2000/5). The Commission also decided that, at its forty-fifth session, in 2001, it would consider two themes, namely, "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)" and "Gender and all forms of discrimination, in particular racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance".

6. The Commission adopted two resolutions (resolution 44/1 on the release of women and children taken hostage, including those subsequently imprisoned, in armed conflicts and resolution 44/2 on women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).[2] The Commission also recommended two draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council (draft resolution I on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan and draft resolution II on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women).[3]

7. In its resolution 44/1, the Commission condemned violent acts in contravention of international humanitarian law against civilian women and children in areas of armed conflict, and called for an effective response to such acts, including the immediate release of such women and children. It also urged all parties to armed conflicts to respect fully the norms of international humanitarian law, to take all necessary measures for the protection of those women and children and to provide them with safe unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance.

8. In its resolution 44/2, the Commission urged Governments to take all necessary measures to strengthen women's economic independence and to protect and promote their human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to allow them to better protect themselves from HIV infection. The Commission urged Governments to take steps to create an environment that promotes compassion and support for those infected with HIV, to provide the legal framework that would protect the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, to enable those who are vulnerable to have access to appropriate voluntary counselling services and to encourage efforts to reduce discrimination and stigmatization.

9. By draft resolution I, the Economic and Social Council would condemn the continuing grave violations of the human rights of women and girls, including all forms of discrimination against them, in all areas of Afghanistan. The Council would also condemn the continued restrictions on women's access to health care and the systematic violation of the human rights of women in Afghanistan, including the restrictions on access to education and to employment outside the home, freedom of movement, and freedom from intimidation, harassment and violence. The Council would urge all the Afghan parties to bring to an end without delay all human rights violations against women and girls and urge States to mainstream a gender perspective in all aspects of their policies and actions related to Afghanistan.

10. By draft resolution II, the Economic and Social Council would call upon the concerned parties, as well as the entire international community, to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the continuity and success of the peace process in the Middle East and the achievement of tangible progress in the improvement of the situation of Palestinian women and their families.

11. During the session, the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women met to consider the list of confidential and non-confidential communications concerning the status of women and submitted a report to the Commission (E/CN.6/2000/CRP.4).

B. Decisions of the Commission on the Status of Women acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly, "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

12. The Commission, acting as the preparatory committee, reaffirmed its commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and expressed the hope that the review of the implementation of the Platform for Action at the special session of the General Assembly would result in an effective outcome document, setting specific concrete measures to overcome remaining obstacles to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The preparatory committee emphasized progress in the implementation of the Platform for Action at the national, regional and international levels and drew attention to the challenges that still remain to its implementation, including the following: lack of human and financial resources; impact of globalization; unequal access to improved communication technologies; HIV/AIDS; poverty; changing nature of conflict and persistence of stereotypical attitudes towards the roles of men and women.

13. The preparatory committee considered the organizational aspects of the special session, completed its work on the draft political declaration to be presented for adoption at the special session, and continued its work on the second outcome document, entitled "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action". The preparatory committee also approved two draft decisions on the participation and accreditation of non-governmental organizations at the special session of the General Assembly, which were forwarded to and adopted by the Assembly (decisions 54/466 and 54/467). During the session, a panel discussion entitled "Outlook on gender equality, development and peace" was held.

III. Results of other functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

A. Commission for Social Development

14. The Commission for Social Development held its thirty-eighth session from 8 to 17 February and on 14 and 17 March 2000. It recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of draft resolution I entitled "Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing".[4] In the draft resolution, it is indicated that a Second World Assembly on Ageing would be convened in Spain in April 2002, and that the Commission would serve as the preparatory committee. The Commission also adopted decision 38/100 on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons.[5]

15. The Commission adopted the agreed conclusions on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (resolution 38/1, annex)[6] and recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of draft resolution II on the further promotion of equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities, which addresses discrimination against women with disabilities.[7]

B. Commission on Population and Development

16. At its thirty-third session, held from 27 to 30 March 2000, the Commission on Population and Development held a general discussion on its special theme "Population, gender and development", under the item entitled "Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development". In discussing the follow-up actions, the Commission emphasized the impact of globalization on women, population changes and the specific roles assigned to men and women. It also recognized poverty eradication and the need for better education of women as important objectives, and issues related to women's reproductive health and the HIV/AIDS pandemic were also discussed.

17. In its resolution 2000/1 on population, gender and development,[8] the Commission requested the Population Division to continue to incorporate gender perspectives in all its research on population policies. In its decision 2000/1 on special themes for the Commission in the years 2001 to 2003,[9] the Commission decided that at its thirty-fourth session it would consider the theme "Population, environment and development", at its thirty-fifth session it would consider "Reproductive rights and reproductive health, with special reference to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)", and at its thirty-sixth session it would consider "Population, education and development".

C. Commission on Narcotic Drugs

18. At its forty-third session, held in Vienna from 6 to 15 March 2000, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted several resolutions on such issues as the establishment and/or strengthening of national and regional prevention programmes; the sale of drugs via the Internet; and the use and trafficking of drugs by children.[9] The Commission recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of draft resolution I, in which the General Assembly would be invited to include the world drug problem on the agenda of the Millennium Summit, to be held from 6 to 8 September 2000.[10]

19. The Commission also recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of draft resolution II, in which the Council would call for the promotion of information and education programmes that will raise awareness of the risks of drug abuse, taking into account gender differences.[10]

D. Commission on Human Rights

20. The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-sixth session from 20 March to 28 April 2000. As in its previous session, the agenda included an item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective", with "Violence against women" as a sub-item. The Commission adopted four resolutions addressing women's human rights, while gender issues were included in several resolutions on the work of human rights treaty bodies, in resolutions on the work of special thematic rapporteurs and in resolutions applying to specific countries.

1. Women's enjoyment of human rights

21. In its resolution 2000/13 on women's equal ownership of, access to and control over land and the equal rights to own property and to adequate housing, the Commission urged Governments to comply fully with their international and regional obligations and commitments concerning land tenure and the equal rights of women to own property and to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing. Governments were urged to work towards the transformation of discriminatory customs and traditions that deny women such rights. Governments, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations were encouraged to undertake education efforts on women's rights to ownership.

22. In its resolution 2000/44 on traffic in women and girls, the Commission urged Governments to take appropriate measures to eliminate trafficking in women and girls and help victims of violence, including the strengthening of legislation and the allocation of resources for comprehensive rehabilitation programmes. Governments, non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies and organizations were called upon to participate in the work of the twenty-sixth session of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, in 2001, which would focus on the issue of trafficking.

23. In its resolution 2000/45, Governments were urged to take measures to address the issue of violence against women. The Commission reiterated its support for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[11] and its Optional Protocol[12] as tools to eliminate violence against women. It also commended the Special Rapporteur on violence against women for her work and renewed her mandate for a period of three years.

24. In its resolution 2000/46 on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, the Commission, invited the Economic and Social Council to give attention to its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective and 1998/2 on the coordinated follow-up of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The Commission urged States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in order to achieve universal ratification of the Convention by the end of 2000. It also welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and urged States to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to it for its early entry into force. The Commission supported the cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights and requested them to prepare a joint work plan for the year 2000 (E/CN.6/2000/8-E/CN.4/2000/118). The Commission also expressed willingness to integrate a gender perspective into all the items of its agenda.

2. Gender issues in the work of human rights treaty bodies, thematic rapporteurs and other mechanisms

25. In several resolutions (2000/9, 2000/15, 2000/17, 2000/18, 2000/19, 2000/20, 2000/21, 2000/23, 2000/27, 2000/28, 2000/31, 2000/33, 2000/38, 2000/44, 2000/45 and 2000/54), the Commission requested its Special Rapporteurs, including those on freedom of opinion and expression (2000/38), on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment (2000/43), and on the human rights of migrants (2000/54), and, in resolution 2000/37, its Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, to apply a gender perspective in their work. Cooperation between several Special Rapporteurs and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women was encouraged.

26. In its resolution 2000/53 on internally displaced persons, the Commission welcomed the special attention paid by the Representative of the Secretary-General to the special assistance, protection and development needs of internally displaced women and children and his commitment to pay more systematic attention to the specific needs of women and children. In its resolution 2000/46, the Commission stressed the need to monitor closely the enjoyment of the human rights of women by the human rights working bodies and, *inter alia*, the importance of giving consideration to the gender balance of membership of human rights treaty bodies.

3. Attention to gender in issue-specific resolutions

27. The violation of women's human rights and the need to take a gender perspective when dealing with particular topics was identified by the Commission in several issue-specific resolutions:

(a) In resolution 2000/5 on the right to development, the Commission affirmed the need to apply a gender perspective in the implementation of the right to development, *inter alia*, by ensuring that women play an active role in the development process;

(b) In resolution 2000/10 on the right to food, the Commission drew attention to the situation of 825 million people, most of whom are women and children, who do not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs;

(c) In resolution 2000/12 on human rights and extreme poverty, the Commission reaffirmed that special attention must be given to the plight of women and children, who often bear the greatest burden of extreme poverty;

(d) In resolution 2000/14 on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Commission stressed the importance of systematically adopting a gender-based approach throughout the preparations for and in the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, to be held in 2001;

(e) In resolution 2000/30 on human rights and terrorism, the Commission deplored the suffering of innocent victims, including women and children;

(f) In resolution 2000/47 on promoting and consolidating democracy, the Commission called upon States to promote gender equality with the aim of achieving full equality between women and men;

(g) In resolution 2000/48 on the human rights of migrants, the Commission called for a focused and consistent approach towards migrants, as a specific vulnerable group, particularly women and children migrants;

(h) In resolution 2000/51 on the human rights of persons with disabilities, the Commission urged Governments to implement, with the cooperation of relevant organizations, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, having particular regard for the needs of women, children and persons with developmental and psychiatric disabilities in order to guarantee their human dignity and integrity;

(i) In resolution 2000/55 on human rights and mass exoduses, the Commission recognized the vulnerability of refugees and internally displaced women and girls to persecution, gender-based discrimination and gender-specific violations of human rights. The Commission called upon States to protect and promote the human rights of all refugees and displaced persons and to ensure that women become full and equal participants in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects and programmes;

(j) In resolution 2000/56 concerning indigenous populations, the Commission recommended that the situation of indigenous people be taken into account in forthcoming United Nations conferences of relevance, including the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

28. The protection of the rights of the girl child was addressed in a number of resolutions, including in resolution 2000/59 on the question of draft optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In particular, the great risk of sexual exploitation of girl children was recognized. In resolution 2000/66 entitled "Towards a culture of peace", the Commission affirmed the need for women, children, men and the elderly to have equal access to an education for peace, and called upon States to promote a culture of peace as an integral approach to preventing violence in its diverse manifestations. In resolution 2000/68 on impunity, States were urged to take appropriate measures to address the question of impunity for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including those perpetrated against women and children.

29. The importance of education in the promotion and protection of human rights was addressed in resolution 2000/71 on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, in which the Commission urged all relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system to provide training in the human rights of women for all United Nations personnel and officials. In resolution 2000/73 on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that particular attention is paid to women among the personnel from developing countries

to be recruited for the existing vacancies and future posts in the Office of the High Commissioner.

30. The promotion of the human rights of women was also affirmed in resolution 2000/76 on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in which national institutions promoting human rights were called upon to participate in the five-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In resolution 2000/84 on defamation of religions, the Commission reaffirmed the call of the World Conference on Human Rights for all Governments to take all appropriate measures to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including practices of discrimination against women.

4. Country-specific resolutions

31. The Commission identified the need to address the violation of women's human rights in various resolutions addressing specific countries, including Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Myanmar, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Yugoslavia. A number of country rapporteurs were asked systematically to apply a gender perspective in their reporting process, including in information collection and recommendations. In several country-specific resolutions, gender was referred to as being a factor in the enjoyment of human rights:

(a) Democratic Republic of the Congo (resolution 2000/15): the Commission expressed its concern at the occurrence of cases of sexual violence against women and children and urged all parties to the conflict in the country to respect the rights of women and children as per the provisions of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law;

(b) Afghanistan (resolution 2000/18): the Commission expressed its concern about the deteriorating economic and social conditions of women and girls in all areas of Afghanistan and about the grave violations of the human rights of women and girls. All the Afghan parties were urged to take urgent measures to bring to an end such violations, including all forms of discrimination against women such as restriction on access to health care, education, employment outside the home, humanitarian aid, freedom of movement and participation in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life. The Secretary-General was invited to fully incorporate gender issues in the ongoing deployment of the civilian affairs observers in Afghanistan, including to ensure a gender perspective in the selection of the staff of the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan in order to enhance women's role in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping;

(c) Equatorial Guinea (resolution 2000/19): the Commission encouraged the Government of Equatorial Guinea to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and encouraged it to promote women's full enjoyment of human rights by taking measures such as ending the practice of imprisoning women for not returning their marriage dowry upon separation from their husbands and promoting women's right to education;

(d) Burundi (resolution 2000/20): the Commission recognized the important role of women in the reconciliation process and the search for peace and welcomed the invitation extended by the Facilitator to Burundi women's representatives to participate as observers in the Arusha negotiation process. The Government of Burundi was also urged to ensure the equal participation of women in Burundian society and to improve women's living conditions;

(e) Rwanda (resolution (2000/21): the Commission urged the Government of Rwanda and invited the International Tribunal for Rwanda to continue giving utmost priority to the prosecution and punishment of crimes of sexual violence committed against women and welcomed the decision of the Tribunal to give a broad definition to acts of sexual violence. It also welcomed the new law on matrimonial property and succession, which ensures full real access by women to their husbands' and parents' property;

(f) Myanmar (resolution 2000/23): the Commission deplored the continuing violations of the human rights of women, often committed by military personnel, in particular forced labour, trafficking and sexual violence, especially directed towards women who are returning refugees, internally displaced or members of ethnic minorities or the political opposition. The Government was urged to fully implement the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in particular the request to prosecute

and punish those who violate women's human rights and to carry out human rights education and gender-sensitization training, in particular for military personnel;

(g) Sierra Leone (resolution 2000/24): the Commission expressed its grave concern at the continuing abuses of human rights and humanitarian law committed in Sierra Leone and the targeting and abuse of women and children. It urged all parties to the Lomé Peace Agreement to respect the human rights and welfare of women and children. It also urged the Government of Sierra Leone, in collaboration with the international community, to give priority attention to the special needs of women and children, in particular those mutilated, sexually abused, gravely traumatized and displaced. The Commission welcomed the human rights training, including specialized gender and child rights training, provided to national human rights monitors, police officers and military personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone;

(h) Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (resolution 2000/26): the Commission called upon officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those of the Republika Srpska, and the Federation at all levels, to combat vigorously the growing problem of trafficking in women and children;

(i) Sudan (resolution 2000/27): the Commission expressed its deep concern at the adverse effect of the current armed conflict on women and children. It called upon the Government of the Sudan to investigate reports of the abduction of women and children, bring to trial persons suspected of supporting or participating in such activities and facilitate the safe return of affected children to their families. The Government of the Sudan was urged to create the conditions necessary for the Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children, established in May 1999, to carry out its work fully, and called upon the international community to expand its support for activities, in particular those of the Committee, aimed at improving respect for human rights and humanitarian law during the conflict;

(j) Islamic Republic of Iran (resolution 2000/28): the Commission welcomed the progress made with regard to the status of women in the areas of education and training, health and integration of a gender dimension into government planning but expressed its concern at the lack of full and equal enjoyment by women of their human rights, and called upon the Government to take measures to promote women's human rights through the review and change of discriminatory laws and practices;

(k) Haiti (resolution 2000/78): the Commission urged the Government of Haiti to institute legal proceedings against perpetrators of human rights violations and to create effective facilities for providing support to the victims, in particular women, children and members of their families;

(l) Cambodia (resolution 2000/79): the Commission welcomed the adoption by the Government of Cambodia, in particular by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veterans, of a five-year action plan to improve the status of women, and urged the Government to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women, including in the political and public life of the country, to combat violence against women in all its forms and to meet its obligations as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(m) Somalia (resolution 2000/81): the Commission expressed its deep concern at reported cases of violence against women and children and condemned the widespread violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular against minorities, women and children, as well as the forced displacement of civilians.

E. Commission on Sustainable Development

32. The Commission on Sustainable Development held its eighth session on 30 April 1999 and from 24 April to 5 May 2000. It discussed issues related to agriculture, land management and economic growth and adopted several decisions, which stressed, *inter alia*, the need to address women's poverty.

33. The Commission encouraged all Governments to implement measures in order to guarantee women the access to technology to ensure the sustainable use of land and water resources and to develop and adopt policies and implement laws that guarantee well-defined and enforceable land rights and promote equal access to land and legal security of tenure for women. The important role of women in sustainable

agricultural and rural development was emphasized and Governments and relevant international organizations were urged to develop further innovative institutional mechanisms to ensure effective stakeholder participation in decision-making related to sustainable agricultural and rural development.

34. The Commission urged Governments to develop and strengthen frameworks for the effective participation by female stakeholders with regard to the management of land resources, and to pay particular attention to the need for women to receive information on sustainable agricultural practices, technologies and markets through capacity-building programmes that utilize information technology. The need for special attention to women when implementing measures for providing greater security and predictability in a liberalized trading system was also stressed.

F. Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

35. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held its ninth session in Vienna from 18 to 20 April 2000. It focused on the review of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice, and recommended to the Economic and Social Council the approval of draft resolution I[13] for adoption by the Millennium Assembly.

36. The Commission also took account of the results of the Tenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders, which was held in Vienna from 10 to 17 April 2000, and recommended to the Economic and Social Council the approval of draft resolution II[13] for adoption by the General Assembly. The Congress addressed, *inter alia*, the issue of women in the criminal justice system, focusing on violence against women in prisons, and pointed out the need for research linking policy and practice with regard to women. The need to document successful programmes for women in the justice system was also stressed. Other topics identified included women prison inmates with young children, and the difficulties faced by women as foreign nationals in prison.

G. Commission on Science and Technology for Development

37. At its fourth session, held from 17 to 21 May 1999, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of draft decision II on the Gender Advisory Board.[14] By that decision the mandate of the Board would be extended until 30 June 2001. The Board has given priority to addressing and furthering opportunities for collaboration with the Commission and member Governments. It has established regional secretariats in Indonesia and Uruguay, which play a key role in facilitating and supporting national committees in the region. Negotiations have commenced to establish an African regional secretariat in Uganda.

38. The Board secretariat has provided resources for policy makers interested in implementing the recommendations of the Commission concerning gender issues. The Gender, Science and Technology Gateway has become a World Wide Web resource site for information, activities, experts and organizations on gender, science and technology (http://gstgateway.wigsat.org). The Board is collaborating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on gender indicators in engineering, science and technology and participated in the UNESCO World Conference on Science, held in Budapest in July 1999. The Board is currently collaborating with UNESCO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Council of Scientific Unions on the initiation of a global follow-up campaign on gender issues.

H. Statistical Commission

39. At its thirty-first session, held from 29 February to 3 March 2000, the Statistical Commission considered the implementation of a project on improving methods and classifications to address gender issues in the measurement of paid and unpaid labour, which had been developed by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Development Research Centre. The project comprises the following activities: (a) promoting the collection of

time-use data, particularly in developing countries, through the development of methodological materials and other means of technical support; (b) compiling statistics on difficult-to-measure sectors of the economy, including the informal sector, home-based work and subsistence agriculture; and (c) improving the measurement of paid and unpaid work in labour force statistics. Under the project the Statistics Division is providing technical assistance to countries in the design of surveys and in the measurement of the informal sector.

40. The multi-year programme of work of the Commission covering the period 2000-2003 contains several topics related to gender issues, such as household income statistics, informal sector statistics, labour and compensation statistics, and demographic and social statistics.

IV. Activities of the regional commissions

A. Economic Commission for Africa

41. During the period under review, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, which served as preparation for Africa's participation and input to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". Member States submitted to ECA their national progress reports on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, which were incorporated into the "Synthesis report on the implementation of the Platform for Action in Africa" prepared by the Commission. The Commission also prepared 12 thematic reports based on the assessment of the progress made, and constraints encountered, in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action. The Sixth African Regional Conference adopted: the African Plan of Action to Accelerate the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, which set out strategies and mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels proposed to resolve the issues that in the past five years have posed serious constraints to the implementation process; and the Declaration of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, which summarized the findings of the assessment process, the emerging issues and the priorities for the next five years.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

42. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) convened the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 2000 Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, at which a set of agreed conclusions on five themes (i.e., women and the economy, violence against women and girls, women and girls in situations of armed conflict, women in power and decision-making, and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women) were adopted. The Meeting provided an impetus for accelerating gender mainstreaming in the activities of the Commission, in particular as they relate to countries with economies in transition.

43. ECE, in cooperation with the Government of Croatia and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) lead programme also organized a Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship: East-West Cooperation, in October 1999, which reviewed the situation of women's entrepreneurship in central European countries and made proposals for possible support measures by government, regional and local authorities and financial institutions. As one of the outcomes of the Conference, ECE is in the process of creating a regional network for the support of women's entrepreneurship in the form of an informal Internet-based forum for discussion and cooperation. Its purpose is to promote research, exchange of experiences and identification of policies and best practice to enhance women's entrepreneurship in the ECE region.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

44. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened the Seventh Regional Conference on Women of Latin America and the Caribbean in Lima in February 2000 in order to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Conference adopted the Lima Consensus, aimed at strengthening

the implementation of both the Regional Programme of Action and the Platform for Action.

45. In order to stimulate conceptual and methodological advances on the issue of gender mainstreaming, ECLAC organized an Expert Group Meeting in October 1999. As a result, the Commission received a mandate to elaborate a project on the issue of gender indicators both at the Eighth Meeting of Specialized Agencies and Other Bodies of the United Nations System on the Advancement of Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, in November 1999, and at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, in February 2000.

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

46. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) organized a high-level intergovernmental meeting to review the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, in October 1999. The meeting constituted the regional preparatory activity for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" and focused on key issues within the context of global trends and demographic changes in the region. The meeting adopted a report containing key actions and initiatives to accelerate the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and was preceded by an expert group meeting in April 1999, which set the framework for the broad issues within which the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action would be evaluated.

47. In order to address the feminization of poverty, a regional meeting on the empowerment of women in poverty was organized in collaboration with the Grameen Bank, in July 1999, at which the integration of gender issues into macroeconomic and social policies, effective empowerment mechanisms and social mobilization for the collective empowerment of women were discussed.

48. As a follow-up to the subregional seminar on the promotion of women in small business in Indochina, a business enhancement course for women, aimed at promoting women's economic empowerment through small business, was held in collaboration with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, in the Philippines in August 1999.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

49. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) provided technical assistance and advisory services to member States in order to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In particular, it provided advisory services to Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in institution- and capacity-building for national machineries for women and non-governmental organizations concerned with women's issues and gender equality.

50. ESCWA carried out a survey to examine the role of non-governmental organizations in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the Arab Plan of Action in order to encourage synergy between the work of Governments and non-governmental organizations. ESCWA also implemented joint activities with United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research and the League of Arab States, working for women's empowerment and gender equality. Activities included the convening of a regional Arab Conference on the Integrated Follow-up to Global Conferences, organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States, in November 1999, which, *inter alia*, included a regional evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

51. In 1999, the Commission implemented a plan of action for mainstreaming a gender perspective into ESCWA policies, plans and programmes, resulting from the ad hoc working group established by the Executive Secretary of the Commission in 1998. In order to put the plan of action into force, the following measures have been taken: gender focal points have been designated in each division; gender mainstreaming has been introduced into the planning and programming process (e.g., in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001); workshops have been organized on capacity-building, gender sensitivity, awareness and mainstreaming for ESCWA staff and a visit from a gender adviser from the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Gender Issues

has been organized to examine ways to implement gender mainstreaming. ESCWA has also worked on a gender-awareness media campaign to be launched regionwide before the end of 2000.

V. Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

52. The fifth session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) took place at United Nations Headquarters from 23 to 25 February 2000. The Committee, whose activities were previously reported in documents E/1999/54 and E/CN.6/2000/2, continues to use a system of task managers for inter-sessional work on its ongoing activities and their reports form the basis for the Committee's decisions at its annual session. Particular emphasis is placed on having as many members as possible, especially non-New York-based entities, including regional commissions, take on task manager responsibilities, or contribute actively to the work of task forces on joint activities inter-sessionally.

53. During the past months, the Committee has met regularly in informal meetings, focusing on system-wide contributions to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. In addition to the organization of a series of side events during the special session, entities of the United Nations system continued to contribute to preparations at the national and regional levels.

54. On the recommendation of the Committee, ACC adopted a statement addressed to the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century".

55. The Committee decided to continue, and to expand, the good practices initiative (task manager: UNIFEM/UNDP), to conduct a content analysis, and to create an analytical framework to provide ongoing summaries of the work displayed on the web site. While the Committee agreed that a publication of good practices would not be prepared because of lack of resources and because it would replicate individual agency efforts, a flyer on the initiative would be prepared. Progress was made in the compilation of gender training materials (task manager: UNICEF/UNDP), which is expected to expand further the availability of gender-related resources on the WomenWatch web site, the United Nations gateway to Internet resources on women. Both projects would be presented in a side event during the special session of the General Assembly.

56. The Committee took note of the completion of the gender focal point study, prepared by the United Nations Population Fund. Based on the findings of that study, the Committee adopted a series of recommendations addressed to all executive heads of United Nations entities and managers who had participated in the study. It also agreed to organize, during the special session, a panel discussion on commitment to gender mainstreaming, featuring senior managers.

57. The Committee discussed and provided further guidance on the study on gender mainstreaming in programme budgets in the United Nations system (task manager: Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, with the Division for the Advancement of Women). The study is being carried out in three phases, and the Committee will review the findings expected to emanate from the project at its sixth session, with a view to forwarding them to ACC for endorsement. A briefing on the project for delegations and other participants was organized during the forty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and a progress report would be presented in a side event during the special session.

58. Noting the challenges that had emerged in the carrying out of the study on methodologies for gender impact analysis, especially with regard to the availability and use of indicators on gender, the Committee decided to continue that work, and ECLAC took over responsibility as task manager from the World Bank.

59. As at previous sessions, the Committee continued its discussion of resources for the Committee's joint activities. The Committee's joint activities, especially the work undertaken by task managers and task forces, are implemented by members over and above their regular work programme, and without any budgetary allocation. A framework for the future funding of the Committee's joint activities will now be developed by

its Chairperson. This might include the establishment of a trust fund, with contributions being sought from donors as well as United Nations entities, for the exclusive purpose of supporting current, as well as future joint activities, in conjunction with the Committee's annual agenda. Other modalities, such as direct contributions to a task manager/task force for the implementation of a joint activity, will also be considered. The Committee has brought this issue to the attention of ACC.

60. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the OECD/Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Gender Equality to convene the fourth in a series of workshops bringing together members of that group and of the Committee. The Committee endorsed the Working Party's proposal of the topic gender equality in governance, with proposed sub-themes that would focus on the links between poverty, governance and gender equality. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (UNCHS) and UNDP agreed to serve as task managers for the preparation, organization and conduct of the workshop, in cooperation with the Working Party. UNCHS agreed to host the workshop in Nairobi from 3 to 5 October 2000, immediately following World Habitat Day (2 October).

61. The Committee continued its active cooperation with other subsidiary bodies of ACC. To that end, it submitted several recommendations to the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) on gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)/common country assessments (CCAs), for reflection in that Committee's work on the Resident Coordinator system. It also established a task force on CCA/UNDAF to work proactively to develop strategies for influencing the CCA/UNDAF process, including to support the United Nations Development Group in gender mainstreaming (task manager: UNIFEM). The Committee also initiated cooperation with the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel), by inviting its Vice-Chairperson to brief the Committee on the work of CCAQ with regard to gender balance and a gender-sensitive work environment.

62. The sixth session of the Committee will take place at United Nations Headquarters from 26 February to 2 March 2001.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1.

[2] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 7* (E/2000/27), chap. I, sect. C.

[3] Ibid., sect. A.

[4] Ibid., *Supplement No. 6* (E/2000/26), chap. I, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., sect. C.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., sect. A.

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5* (E/2000/25), chap. I, sect. B.

[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 8* (E/2000/28), chap. I, sect. C.

[10] Ibid., sect. A.

[11] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

[12] General Assembly resolution 54/4, annex.

[13] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 10* (E/2000/30), chap. I, sect. A.

[14] Ibid., *1999, Supplement No. 11* (E/1999/31), chap. I, sect. B.